



Unity Partners d.b.a.

Project Unity

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Mr. Gary Balmain
City of College Station Community Development
College Station, Tx. 77840

Dear Gary,

This letter is written to express my opinion concerning the funding for a one stop social service center in College Station. I have been involved in the assessment process to determine the feasibility for a one stop center over the past two years. I have participated in; site trips to other one stop social service facilities; the most recent Health and Human Services assessment performed by Glass and Associates; public hearings; focus groups, etc. I helped facilitate focus groups to create the five year consolidated plan for College Station and I have facilitated Project Unity Community Partnership Board meetings where the feasibility of a one stop social service center in College Station was discussed. Based on data collected through these venues, it is my opinion that a one stop social service facility is not in the best interests of College Station residents at this time. The reasons for my conclusion are as follows:

The Lincoln Center Master plan is over 10 years old. Many collaborative activities have taken place since that time which have enhanced access for College Station residents. Some of those activities include:

The BVCAA Community Health Center which has co-located many needed services in our twin cities. Agencies providing services at the center include:

- BVCAA: Family Health Clinic
Family Health Dental Clinic
Family Health Pharmacy
- The Prenatal Clinic
- TAMU Counseling and Assessment Clinic
- TAMU Community Health Education Lab
- TAMUHSC Genetic Counseling
- Brazos Valley United Way Information and Referral
- Texas Department of Human Services
- Project Unity
- CASA program

Another health facility, the Family Medicine Center was created for TAMU medical school interns to provide medical care for low income families.

The CHIP insurance program has been implemented which provides low cost medical and dental insurance for families who originally "fell through the cracks" because their income was too high to qualify for services.

The Brazos Valley Workforce Board and Department of Human Services have co-located their main offices to help provide more efficient services.

Project Unity's Community Partnership Board, comprised of over 80 organizations meet regularly to discuss barriers faced by families within our 7 county region and work on solutions to those barriers.

Funding and Support Provided by the Texas Department of Protective & Regulatory Services
City of Bryan • Bryan ISD • Brazos Valley Council of Governments • City of College Station
Children's Miracle Network • United Way of the Brazos Valley • Brazos Food Bank

Within College Station, several developments have occurred over the past 10 years which serve to enhance access for College Station residents. These developments include:

*The College Station ISD Barbara Bush Parent Center which provides adult learning activities (GED, ESL) parent education, and more.

*The Heritage Apartment Complex which provides quality housing for low income residents, where 75% of their residents have a physical or mental disability. Agencies like Project Unity and Martin Luther Homes and Twin City Mission are co- locating on the Heritage Apartment site.

*Twin City mission is building The Haven for transitional housing for the homeless.

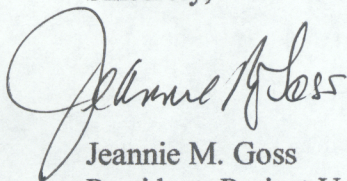
*Twin City mission has opened a Community Closet for College Station residents needing food and clothing assistance.

*Project Unity has a full time coordinator of services located at the Heritage Apartments serving all College Station residents in need of services.

In addition to the collaborative activities stated above, many assessments were done with College Station residents to determine what they believed were barriers to services. Overwhelmingly, residents stated that transportation was not a barrier. Instead, the top barriers to services were that residents did not know the services existed and once they got to the services, the process which they were required to go through oftentimes proved too difficult to get the help they needed.

In conclusion, it is in my opinion that a one stop social service facility would not be in the best interest of College Station at this time as the needs identified through data collection are not consistent with the proposed solution: a one stop social service facility. Instead, I recommend that the City of College Station community development staff continue to encourage appropriate organizations to collaborate within existing facilities; to stay involved with the development of the Information and Referral/CaseManagement/Computerized Client Tracking Infrastructure that is aimed at reaching isolated residents through informing them of services; and to continue to participate as a partner in the collaborative, supporting the efforts underway to streamline the process that families are required to go through to get assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jeannie M. Goss', written in a cursive style.

Jeannie M. Goss
President, Project Unity